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New Lepidoptera.

By W. George Howes.

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Aletia probenota n.sp. Plate 7, Fig. 1.

Wing expanse, 34 mm.

Head grey, with an intermixture of closely dotted black scales. Palpi well developed—heavily scaled, with grey at base and with the tips fairly long and slender.

Antennae grey on basal fourth, then black to the tips, convex above, flattened below. The convex surface is covered with apressed scales: the flat under surface has short, stiff cilia grouped on each of the segments, gradually tapering off towards apex. Forelegs grey, tarsi annulated, with white at the joints.

Thorax with well developed crests, mainly black, but with grey scales intermixed.

Abdomen ochreous grey, with crests fairly well developed. On either side of the first three segments are black points close to the dorsal line. Tufts at the side and end of the abdomen ochreous grey.

Forewings black, relieved by numerous scattered white scales. A white basal line forms two rounded loops from costa but does not reach dorsum. The first line is grey-white with three blunt projections in upper half of wing, finishing in two well rounded projections before dorsum. Second line shows distinct indentations above dorsum. Subterminal line grey-white, well defined, especially near dorsum. Subterminal area irrorated with white scales, which increase along the edge of the wing and run out along the vein ends and into the cilia. Between each of these white points is a patch of dark scales. The cilia are grey-brown.

Reniform white with the central area light grey, below the centre grey outlined in black. There is a black patch on each side.

Orbicular grey and slightly elongate, outlined in black.

Hindwings ochreous grey, darker towards termen, with greyish-white cilia having a dark basal line.

This moth is apparently closely allied to *Aletia parmata,* but the distinctive black and white colouring makes it easily recognisable. Mr. S. Lindsay has kindly pointed out the peculiar shape of the antennae as a good point of distinction as *A. parmata* has almost circular antennae with some scattered scales on the upper side—the lower being finely pubescent. In *A. probenota* the antennae are hemispherical, heavily scaled on the convex side, and the flat lower side has short, stiff cilia.

Five specimens taken at Homer in late December, 1943. Mr. J. T. Salmon and Mr. T. M. Smith collected others at the same time and place.

Types in collection of W. G. Howes, at Dunedin.

Aletia argentaria n.sp. Plate 7, Fig. 2.

Expanse, 37 mm.

Head clothed with a mixture of grey and ochreous scales. Palpi not prominent and short tipped. Antennae grey-brown, with finely ciliated pectinations—pectinations twice the width of shaft.

Thorax clothed with a mixture of dark grey and yellowish brown hairs.

Abdomen ochreous, with well developed tufts at sides and posterior.

Forewings, general colour, stone grey.

Basal line dark grey, margined outwardly with light grey. First line very indistinct—hardly discernable. Second line dark, but thin and rather faint. Subterminal line projects outwards towards termen at just below apex and continues on down to dorsum with a series of very small outward indentations on the vein crossings. Subterminal area stone grey, with very small ochreous spots bordering the subterminal line between the veins. The rest of the wing surface is stone grey, with a very dark grey suffused band running from costa between reniform and orbicular to dorsum. A similar darker band crosses the wing just before the subterminal line. Reniform, orbicular, and claviform are stone grey centred and outlined in dark grey. The reniform also has two small central patches of ochreous scales. Cilia grey, with a dark grey line at base. Veins are outlined by darker marks towards the termen and half-way between termen and reniform a series of light grey dots crosses the wing.

Hind Wings pale ochreous, darker towards termen. Cilia ochreous, paler at tips.

This species, while having a strong superficial resemblance to *Aletia moderata,* is readily distinguished by having moderately pectinated antennae.

A single specimen was taken at the Wilderness, near Lake Te Anau, on January 5, 1941. Although I have been twice to the area since then, no further specimens have been taken, but the species is so distinct there is nothing to gain by further deferring describing it.

The single type specimen is in the collection of W. G. Howes, Dunedin.

Melanchra sericata n.sp. Plate 7, Figs. 3, 4.

Wing expanse, 40 mm.

Head, red-brown. Palpi prominent, densely clothed with red-brown. Antennae red-brown, pectinations long.

Thorax rich red-brown, crests well developed.

Abdomen grey-brown, with side and posterior tufts red-brown.

Forewings dark red-brown. Apex moderately acute, termen slightly bowed. Basal line dark brown (almost black) edged on both sides with light brown and strongly angled outwards at centre of wing. This line does not reach dorsum. First line dark red-brown, edged with lighter brown. Second line indistinct but slightly darker than the surrounding area. Subterminal line bright red-brown, with a blunt projection towards termen just below the apex, two tooth-

Fig. 1.—*Aletia probenota.*
Fig. 2.—*Aletia argentaria.*
Fig. 3.—*Melanchra sericata.*
Fig. 4.—*Melanchra sericata* Variety.

L. D. Coombs, photo.

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like projections at about two-thirds below apex, the upper being narrower and shorter than the lower. These projections do not reach the terminal edge.

There is a dark brown suffusion from the terminal line to the termen tending to grey at the outer edge and at the apex. Cilia warm brown, tipped with ochreous, with darker bars at the vein endings.

A dark, almost black, suffusion crosses wing from between orbicular and reniform to half way along dorsum, and extends outwards on the lower portion of the wing to the subterminal line just below the tooth-like markings.

Reniform and orbicular outlined in black, the reniform being light red in centre, the orbicular dark centred.

Veins on lower area of the forewing lightly outlined in grey intermixed with black spots.

Hindwings dull ochreous-brown, evenly coloured. Cilia lighter, having also a dark line at base.

When first taken this species shows an unusual beautiful silky flush, but this unfortunately tends to fade in set specimens. It is apparently close to *Melanchra bromias,* a species so far recorded only from the Chatham Islands.

A variety occurs with a delicate ashy-grey suffusion on the thoracic crests and on the outer areas of the forewings.

One specimen taken in December, 1942, near Homer Tunnel. Two specimens in December, 1943; and five taken by Mr. T. M. Smith at Homer in late December, 1943.

Types in collection of W. G. Howes, Dunedin.